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Anarchist Black Cross
Starting an anarchist black cross group: A guide
Summer 2018

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Starting an anarchist black cross group: A guide

Anarchist Black Cross

Summer 2018

Dedication

This zine is dedicated to Anna Campbell. Anna was killed by Turkish forces while fighting alongside Women's Protection Units (YPJ) in the defence of Afrin in March 2018.

Anna was a dedicated member of Bristol Anarchist Black Cross and took her commitment to solidarity and mutual aid to her grave.

Rest in Power Anna

- https://twitter.com/A4K_MOSCOW - ABC Moscow's Twitter.
- https://www.facebook.com/abc.russia.spb - ABC St. Petersburg
- http://abc38.noblogs.org – ABC Irkutsk
- http://rupression.com - Informational and solidarity campaign for anarchists and antifascists in Russia accused of forming a terrorist network

Spain

- http://www.nodo50.org/cna – ABC Spain
- https://solidaritatrebel.noblogs.org - Solidaritat rebel, a solidarity group for support accused anarchists in Aachen bank robbery case

Sweden

- http://abcstockholm@riseup.net – ABC Stockholm
- http://abcumea@riseup.net – ABC Umeå

USA

- http://www.abcf.net – Anarchist Black Cross Federation
- http://sbrooklynabcf.wordpress.com – South Brooklyn ABC
- http://denverabc.wordpress.com – Denver ABC
- http://nycabc.wordpress.com – NYC ABC

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Germany

- http://gefangenensolijena.noblogs.org – Prisoner Solidarity Jena
- http://abcrhineland.blackblogs.org – ABC Rhineland
- http://abcdd.org – ABC Dresden
- http://abcj.blackblogs.org – ABC Jena

Ireland

- http://abcireland.wordpress.com – ABC Derry
- http://dublinabc.ana.rchi.st – ABC Dublin

Italy

- http://www.autistici.org/cna – CNA/ABC Napoli

Mexico

- http://www.abajolosmuros.org – ABC Mexico

Netherlands

- http://abcnijmegen.wordpress.com – ABC Nijmegen

Poland

- http://ack.most.org.pl – ABC Poznan and Warsaw

Russia

- http://wiki.avtonom.org/index.php – ABC Moscow.

- http://cnario.noblogs.org – ABC Rio de Janeiro

Canada

- http://4strugglemag.org – 4 Struggle Mag
- http://torontoabc.wordpress.com – ABC Toronto

Colombia

- http://abajolosmuros.org – Bogota CNA/ABC

Czech

- http://anarchistblackcross.cz – ABC Czech
- http://antifenix.noblogs.org – Antifenix solidarity campaign

England

- http://www.brightonabc.org.uk – ABC Brighton
- http://bristolabc.wordpress.com – ABC Bristol
- http://greenandblackcross.org – Green and Black Cross

Finland

- http://www.amrhelsinki.org – ABC Helsinki

France

- http://www.anarchistblackcross-mars.antifa-net.fr – Marseille ABC

Welcome

This zine is a resource for anyone wanting to start an Anarchist Black Cross group. It was a collective effort of people from various ABC groups across Europe. We hope you find it inspiring and useful.

The past several decades we have witnessed various forms of crisis emerging all over the globe and while resisting and fighting back, we as anarchists are paying close attention to the changing patterns and tactics of state repression. To save the status quo and powers-that be they divide and rule. They co-opt struggles and pacify subversive movements. Meanwhile, we are striving to break free.

We need to destroy all the prisons, and free all the prisoners. Our position is an abolitionist stance against the state and it's prisons. Of course, the only easy solutions to such a complex problem like prisons are the false solutions. But abolition is not a simple answer nor an easy solution. It is a long way to go. That is why exactly we are talking about the Anarchist Black Cross and not liberal, statist or reformist ways of organising. Our tactics are based upon sharing and solidarity, not charity. More than ever, it is critically important to share the knowledge and organisational tips with people that want to take action. That is why we wrote this zine: shared knowledge is an important tool in fighting against repression. The best defense against repression is preparation. We hope this zine can support you to organise where you are and build more resilience to repression in your movements and struggles for liberation. If you would like support or have questions about this zine please email: tillallarefree at riseup.net

What is The Anarchist Black Cross and Why Does It Exist?

The Anarchist Black Cross is an international network of anarchist groups and individuals engaged in practical solidarity with prisoners and broader anti-repression struggles.

Prisoner Support

We support revolutionaries, anarchists and others trapped in the prison system. We support and publicise prisoners' efforts to organise and resist the system from the inside. We try to work through letters, visits, material aid, as well as demonstrations, campaigns and spreading information about prisoners, the reality of prisons and the class system which created them. Fundraising and material support is a key part of our work. Many of us also support prisoners and those affected by repression emotionally, with friendship and solidarity as our weapons. In all of what we do, we try to create links in and out of prisons.

Anti-Repression and Movement Defence Work

The state and those that wish to destroy movements for liberation attack us on many levels. The Anarchist Black Cross network aims to build the infrastructure to be resilient to repression so that we can continue fighting for liberation and support comrades harmed by this state violence. Many groups organise ongoing long-term solidarity campaigns with those affected by various waves of repression across the world. Indeed, many ABC groups start in response to a repressive operation in their region.

Movement and community defence can involve many things. The Anarchist Black Cross has been engaged in diverse forms over decades – from legal defence campaigns and committees, to maintaining physical solidarity against the police during factory and school occupations, performing roles of security and physical defence against white supremacist and neo-fascist attacks, as well as engaging in armed defence of social movements. ABC groups also

- Contra-Info - is an international multilanguage counter-information and translation node, maintained by anarchists, anti-authoritarians and libertarians across the globe. `http://en-contrainfo.espiv.net`
- Act for Freedom Now - News of insurrection and resistance from around the globe. `http://actforfree.nostate.net`
- Anarchist News - Non-sectarian source for news about and of concern to anarchists. `http://anarchistnews.org`
- Untorelli Press - Anarchist publishing project. `http://untorellipress.noblogs.org`
- Elephant Editions - Collection of ideas, dreams and experiments. `http://elephanteditions.net`
- Anarchist Library - Site that collates many publications for reading/download. `http://theanarchistlibrary.org`

Anarchist Black Cross Groups Worldwide

Australia:

- `htttp://abcmelb.wordpress.com` – ABC Melbourne
- `http://www.facebook.com/abcoceania` – ABC Oceania

Austria

- `http://www.abc-wien.net` – ABC Wien

Belarus

- `http://abc-belarus.org` – ABC Belarus

Brazil

- Wild Fire - Anarchist Prisoner Solidarity project producing newsletters. http://wildfire.noblogs.org
- The Audre Lorde Project's Safe OUTside the System Collective - Organising efforts for community safety resisting police violence. http://alp.org/programs/sos
- Bent Bars Project - a letter-writing project for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, gender-variant, intersex, and queer prisoners in Britain. http://bentbarsproject.org
- Generation Five - Organisation working to end child sexual abuse in five generations, from an abolitionist perspective. http://generationfive.org
- Sisters Inside - Australian based group who work from an abolitionist perspective http://www.sistersinside.com.au
- A World Without Police - a collective of organizers from across the U.S. and internationally. We work to connect people struggling against the everyday violence of the police, and to provide practical, organizational and theoretical tools for use in our movement. http://aworldwithoutpolice.org

Anarchist News Sites

- It's Going Down - a digital community center for anarchist, anti-fascist, autonomous anti-capitalist and anti-colonial movements. http://itsgoingdown.org
- 325 - Anarchist/anti-capitalist information clearing house and DIY media network for social war. http://325.nostate.net

often organise workshops, zines and other material to support people to learn about repression, security culture and solidarity.

The Anarchist Black Cross exists to strengthen struggles for freedom and liberation by providing mental, emotional, material, and physical support to individual, groups, communities and movements. Ultimately, we want to help ensure the strength of our movements from the inside out. We want to support struggles to be a threat to state, capitalist, white supremacist, patriarchal power and other forms of domination.

The History of the Anarchist Black Cross

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation in the United States have written an overview of the history of ABC which we have shared below:

Since the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), has been on the frontline in supporting those imprisoned for struggling for freedom and liberty. Until recently, the history of the ABC movement has been lost to the pages of time. The present generation of ABC collectives were left rootless with little known information about this organisation. Now, specific questions regarding our origin can now be put to rest. We have now begun to rediscover our roots.

The year of origin has been a nagging question regarding the history of the Anarchist Black Cross, also known as the Anarchist Red Cross (ARC). According to Rudolph Rocker, once the treasurer for the Anarchist Red Cross in London, the organisation was founded during the "hectic period between 1900 and 1905." Despite his involvement in the early stages, we do not feel these dates are very accurate. According to Harry Weinstein, one of the two men who began the organisation, it began after his arrest in July or August of 1906. Once released, Weinstein and others provided clothing to anarchists sentenced to exile in Siberia. This was the early stages

of the ARC. He continued his efforts in Russia until his arrival in New York in May of 1907. Once he arrived, he helped to create the New York Anarchist Red Cross.

Other accounts place the year origin in 1907. During June and August of 1907, Anarchists and Socialist Revolutionaries gather together in London for two conferences. It is believed that Vera Figner, a Socialist Revolutionary, met with Anarchists to discuss the plight of the political prisoners in Russia. After this meeting, the Anarchist Red Cross organized in London and in New York. In addition to this information, we do know that members of the organisation were on trial in 1906-1907 in Russia. Therefore, We feel the most accurate date of origin for the Anarchist Red Cross would be late 1906- early 1907 for the Russia section; June or August 1907 for the creation of the International section.

However, the reason for the creation of the Anarchist Red Cross is not in dispute. It was formed after breaking away from the Political Red Cross (PRC). The PRC was controlled by the Social Democrats and refused to provide support to Anarchist and Social Revolutionary Political Prisoners, despite continued donations from other Anarchists and Social Revolutionaries. As one former Political Prisoner and member of the Anarchist Red Cross stated,"In some prisons there was little distinction made between Anarchists and other Political Prisoners, but in others Anarchists were refused any help."

The newly formed ARC considered these actions criminal and vowed that any prison where Anarchists were in the majority, the ARC would provide support to all Anarchist and Social Revolutionaries Political Prisoners.

Because of their support for Political Prisoners, members of the group were arrested, tortured and killed by the Tsarist regime. The organisation was deemed illegal and membership was reason enough for arrest and imprisonment in Artvisky Prison, one of the worst hard labor jails in Siberia. ARC members and prisoners who managed to escape from prison fled from Russia creating chapters

united family in the struggle for survival and freedom. http://www.tgijp.org

- The Anarchist Black Cross Federation - Federation of groups supporting prisoners, political prisoners and prisoners of war. http://www.abcf.net/

- Przeciwko Więzieniom_ A project of ABC Warsaw and virtual library of antiprison and anti-repression zines. https://przeciwkowiezieniom.noblogs.org

- Empty Cages Collective - organising against the prison industrial complex in the UK. https://www.prisonabolition.org

- Community Action Against Prison Expansion (CAPE) - Grassroots coalition of groups fighting prison expansion in the UK. http://cape-campaign.org

- The Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee - A union for the incarcerated fighting for prison abolition started by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Mostly in the US and the UK. Supported prisoners to organise the biggest prisoner work strike in history in September 2016. http://incarceratedworkers.org

- INCITE! - Activist organization of radical feminists of colour advancing a movement to end violence against women of colour and through direct action, critical dialogue and organizing. http://incite-national.org

- Critical Resistance - Building an international movement to end the prison industrial complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. http://criticalresistance.org

ity is questionable https://medium.com/s/trustissues/the-lifespan-of-a-lie-d869212b1f62]

In The Name Of The Father (1993): In the Name of the Father is Irish-BritishAmerican biographical courtroom drama film co-written and directed by Jim Sheridan. It is based on the true story of the Guildford Four, four people falsely convicted of the 1974 Guildford pub bombings, which killed four off-duty British soldiers and a civilian

Salvador (2006): Salvador (Puig Antich) is Spanish film directed by Manuel Huerga. It is based on the Francesc Escribano book Compte enrere. La història de Salvador Puig Antich, which depicts the time Salvador Puig Antich spent on death row prior to his execution by garrote (the last one by mean of this), under Franco's Francoist State in 1974.

Sacco e Vazetti (1971): The story is based on famous events surrounding the trial and judicial execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two anarchists of Italian origin, who were sentenced to death by a United States court in the 1920s.

The Shawshank Redemption (1994): The Shawshank Redemption is a drama film based on the 1982 Stephen King novella Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption. It tells the story of banker Andy Dufresne, who is sentenced to life in Shawshank State Penitentiary for the murder of his wife and her lover, despite his claims of innocence.

Zero for Conduct (1933): The film draws extensively on boarding school experiences to depict a repressive and bureaucratised educational establishment in which surreal acts of rebellion occur, reflecting anarchist view of childhood.

Organizations and Projects

- TGI (Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex) Justice Project - TGI Justice Project is a group of transgender people—inside and outside of prison—creating a

in London, New York, Chicago and other cities in Europe and North America.

The 1917 Revolution caused a celebration throughout the Socialist, Anarchist, and Communists communities. The ARC liquidated and members began to make plans to return to Russia in hopes of participating in the new society. Sadly, their return was met by Bolsheviks repression, similar to that of the Tsarist era. After a few years of hibernation, the group was forced to resurface to assist the Political Prisoners in the new Bolshevik society. Once again the organisation was made illegal and membership meant imprisonment and/or death.

During the Russian Civil War, the ARC's name changed to the Anarchist Black Cross to avoid confusion with the International Red Cross, also organising relief in the country. It was also during this period that the organisation organized self-defence units against political raids by the Cossack and Red armies.

During the next 7 decades the group would continue under various different names but has always considered itself part of the Anarchist Red Cross/ Anarchist Black Cross formation. ABC's support for Political Prisoners spread to the four corners of the globe. What was once a typically Russian-Jewish organisation, now had many faces and ethnicities.

During the 1960s, the Anarchist Black Cross was reformed in Britain by Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer with a focus on providing aid for anarchist prisoners in Francisco Franco's Spain. The reason for this was Christie's experience of the Spanish State's jail and the importance of receiving food parcels. At that time there were no international groups acting for Spanish anarchist and Resistance prisoners. The first action of the re-activated group was to bring Miguel García García, whom Christie met in prison, out of Spain on his release. He went on to act as the group's International secretary, working for the release of others.

In the 80's, the ABC began to grow and new ABC groups began to emerge in North America. In the United States, the ABC name

had been kept alive by a number of completely autonomous groups scattered throughout the country and had grown to support a wide variety of prison issues.

The 1990's and 2000's brought several ABC formations in North America (ABCC, ABCN, ABCF). The relationship between these formations has always been considered strenuous. The Break the Chains conference in August 2003, along with side bar discussions between collectives, brought about a better working relationship between the ABCF and ABCN formations. (The ABCC was a short lived formations, dying off in the early 1990s.)

Various ABC groups have also been existing in Europe in different forms for decades.

How do ABC Groups Organise?

There are a lot of different ABC groups around the world. Each of them have autonomy to decide on how the group functions and what are the principles that are in the core of the group. Autonomy and decentralization are helping us to make sure that no group or individual is capable of forcing other groups to do things against the principles of those groups.

To make sure that decisions within the groups are made with consideration of all the members of the group, we encourage everybody to use consensus. Some groups who do not want to practice consensus are choosing to use simple majority or super majority voting. Eventually, it is completely up to you to decide what kind of decision making fits your group. However, it is important to talk it through before hand at the beginning of group formation to avoid misunderstandings with other members of the group

Types of Organising

Depending on the current political situation in different countries, groups can select different types of organising itself, starting from open groups with open membership and ending up with

Escape from Alcatraz (1979): Take the tour around San Francisco's notorious Alcatraz prison island and you'll hear that nobody has ever successfully escaped – but one man broke out and disappeared, and this movie tells his tale. Clint Eastwood is as fine and understated as ever as Frank Morris, and the movie manages to sidestep the majority of prison movie cliches

Escape from Sobibor (1987): Escape from Sobibor is a story of the mass escape from the extermination camp at Sobibor, the most successful uprising by Jewish prisoners of German extermination camps.

The Green mile (1999): The lives of guards on Death Row are affected by one of their charges: a black man accused of child murder and rape, yet who has a mysterious gift.

Guerilla (2017): Guerrilla is a six-part British drama miniseries set in early 1970s London, against the backdrop of the Immigration Act 1971 and British black power movements, such as the British Black Panthers and Race Today Collective. A plot is a love story set in the atmosphere of one of the most politically explosive times in UK history.

Hunger (2008): IRA fighters are struggling in a Northern Irish prison and setting up a hunger strike.

Kiss of the Spider Woman (1985): The film tells of two very different individuals who share a prison cell in Brazil during the Brazilian military government: Valentin Arregui, who is imprisoned (and has been tortured) due to his activities on behalf of a leftist revolutionary group, and Luis Molina, a transgender woman in prison for having sex with an underage boy

The Stanford Prison Experiment (2015): Stanford University psychology professor Philip Zimbardo conducts a psychological experiment to test the hypothesis that the personality traits of prisoners and guards are the chief cause of abusive behavior between them. In the experiment, Zimbardo selects fifteen male students to participate in a 14-day prison simulation to take roles as prisoners or guards [editors note: the original SPE's valid-

- Crimethinc Radio #27: Anti-Police Riots in Ferguson
- Crimethinc Radio #50: The History and Future of Prison Strikes and Solidarity
- A-Radio Berlin. Presentation: the Prison Strike in the USA 2016
- A-Radio Berlin: Belarus. Former anarchist prisoner about his experiences on how to survive jail
- A-Radio Berlin: Interview with Anarchist Black Cross Belarus on the repression, Ukraine and the refugees
- A-Radio Berlin: Chile. The hungerstrike of Mapuche Political Prisoners in the Iglesias Case
- A-Radio Berlin: Anarchist Black Cross in Czech republic. Antifenix Presentation
- The Channel Zero Network. Network of the anarchist podcasts and radios

Some Cheesy and Not Cheesy Films

We chose couple of our favorite pop culture (not only) films about prison. For more, follow: https://solidarity.international/index. php/2018/06/05/movies-for-screenings and check out larger list of films.

Brubaker (1980): Brubaker is a 1980 American prison drama film directed by Stuart Rosenberg. It stars Robert Redford as newly arrived prison warden Henry Brubaker, who attempts to clean up a corrupt and violent penal system

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (2008): Set during WWII, a story seen through the innocent eyes of Bruno, the eight-yearold son of the commandant at a German concentration camp, whose forbidden friendship with a Jewish boy on the other side of the camp fence has startling and unexpected consequences.

clandestine groups that are known only to the people facing repressions. All types have their pluses and minuses that should be taken in consideration when you start your own group.

Open Group

This type of organising is not often used and is common to liberal democracies, where solidarity work might be not a threat to activists. In this form, the group is open to new members and have processes established to let new willing people join decision making processes.

With an open process, we can bring new passionate people to the work of solidarity without complicated procedures of building up your reputation and earning trust from the movement. With more energy inside of the group, more can be achieved. It is also quite easy to collect money, as real faces presenting the group can earn more trust among people than masked anonymous activists.

As for the negative sides, you can see an easy possibility for police to infiltrate the group and disrupt processes going on inside. Consider this question seriously and how you are going to confront this in case it appears.

Also, it is quite easy to figure out who are the activists of the group and bring the group down by direct repression as membership is transparent.

Semi-Open/Closed group

This is a type of group that only allows trusted or well-known activists inside of the group. These groups might be built from individuals but also members of local anarchist organisations that are aware of upcoming or existing problems.

It might also be decided that membership of the group shouldn't be exposed to the third people if it is not required. This might help you avoid possible repressions in future, even if risks are minimal at the current stage of state repressions.

The benefit of this group structure is the atmosphere of trust that might push group activity further in different directions. It is harder for the state or capital to disrupt activity of the group. On

top of that, many such groups are developing into affinity groups that is hard to do with open groups.

Apart from that, in case of repressions targeting the whole group it will be hard for the state to attack all the members, meaning that semi-open or closed groups have a bigger level of survivability against direct repression.

One of the main negatives of semiopen/closed groups is the bigger dependence on individual members. Due to the complicated procedures of building trust, it might be complicated to find new people to join the group instead of those who have decided to change their activity focus.

It is harder for people to get in touch with the collective in case of repression or some questions connected with upcoming repressions. This can be addressed by building up additional ways of contacting the group. For example, mail that is checked every day, or even one or two people from the group that are known inside of the anarchist circles as activists of ABC.

Organise Locally

Eventually, ABC work is done locally and is heavily connected with the specifics of the region. That's why, for example, it is quite hard for people from Russia to support activists from Finland and vice versa. We discourage local groups from forming one big group that is covering a big region. We are decentralising our structures and making it hard for the state to hit everyone at once.

However local organisation doesn't mean isolation. At the same time we are organising together with different groups and learning from each other. Solidarity and support from neighbouring regions or even from distant parts of the world are extremely important for ABC work. We strong decentralised but the real power comes in cooperation.

Decentralisation is also giving us the possibility to go different ways. There are situations where groups were deciding not to support some activists/cases due to political principles, while others

- Lockdown: prison, repression and gender nonconformity - A 22-page zine analysing the enforced gender segregation and classification in prisons as well as strategies for resistance.
- Prison Abolition is a Queer issue - A4 handout on why prison abolition is a queer issue
- Prisons Will Not Protect You - An anthology by the radical LGBTQ group "Against Equality"
- Resource section on Prisons by Against Equality_ A full library of links and articles about queer struggle and prison
- Still We Rise - A resource pack for transgender and non-gender conforming people in prison
- The Queer, feminist and trans politics of prison abolition toolkit

Videos, Films and and Podcasts
Podcasts

- Resisting Gender Violence Without Cops or Prisons Talk by Victoria Law
- Decolonization Means Prison Abolition Film of a discussion at a conference in Portland.
- Crimethinc Radio #4: Prisoners of the World Unite
- Crimethinc Radio #6: Making Police Obsolete
- Crimethinc Radio #8: Prison Abolition and Community Accountability
- Crimethinc Radio #17: Conspiracy! State Repression Strategies and Anarchist Resistance

- Prison Abolition is Practical - Article by Nathan Goodman
- The Abolitionist Toolkit -Toolkit for abolitionists developed by Critical Resistance

Policing and Repression

- On the Out - A zine about life after prison, produced by Bristol ABC.
- Under the Yoke of the State - Selected anarchist responses to prisons and crime, vol 1. 1886 – 1929
- On Repression Patterns in Europe_ A zine from ABC Dresden bringing analysis and interviews with anarchist folks who encountered repression and terrorist charges in European context in last several years

Organising and Resistance

- How Nonviolence Protects the State - Written by Peter Gelderloos.
- Winds from Below: Radical community organising to make a revolution possible. Book produced by the Team Colours Health and Prisons
- Dying with cancer: a booklet for prisoners. Guide produced by Macmillan Cancer Support
- Treatment Industrial Complex - A new report from the US on how for-profit corporations are undermining efforts to treat and rehabilitate prisoners for corporate gain.

Gender and Queer Struggles

were eager to help. This eventually gives autonomy of decision that doesn't paralyse other activity in contradictory cases.

It might be worth asking close to your group if there are bigger cooperative projects happening between groups in your region. Most probably, there is already! If not – don't get desperate, there are some groups that prefer working on their own, but it doesn't mean that everybody is sticking to the same plan. Keep asking and searching and you might find the groups that you will be working with together for years to come.

Don't get surprised that some groups are more open than the others. Different political situations are building different political profiles, where activists might be suspicious of new groups/people before they figure you out. This is a process that most of us have to go through one way or another to build up networks of trust.

What do ABC Groups do?

To make this section more interesting, we published interviews with ABC organisers from around the world. They share what their different groups have been doing, as well as the highlights and challenges they have experienced.

I got involved in ABC a few months after a close friend was murdered in prison in Texas. I wanted to do something productive with the anger I felt after his death.

Our group do all kinds of stuff, from fundraisers (we have started doing monthly burger nights as one of us is an amazing chef) to letter writing, to demos. It's important because of how nonjudgemental the approach is – we aren't looking for "worthy" people to support, but want to show love and solidarity to all people in prison, en route to destroying the prison system altogether.

The group itself keeps me going, because whilst the crew is super on it, they are also super kind and thoughtful. I only hope I can do the same for them!

My advice would be take care of the other people in your crew, and yourself. You have an incredible potential to change so much, so take care of each other.

...

I joined a new group that formed in Warsaw at the very beginning of 2014 or 15. I already knew about ABC and how it works in Poland but the situation in Warsaw started to be complicated for some activists and there was a need to have a supporting group here. Plus I was sceptical and critical about how support for the the political repressed people looks like and how it could look like. We are doing good. Feeling like this small group of people are very dedicated to this work and we are building good relations in the group step by step.

We are trying as much as it's possible to skip the way of 'bureaucracy' and trying to take an individual decision about individual cases. We are also interested in communicating about the values and political beliefs that this group works on.

I believe this work really needs to be done - that's my biggest reason for starting in this group and keeping it together in the hard times. I think that we need to build not just network, infrastructure, critiques, resistance but we need to take care of each other at the same time.

I think the biggest challenges for me were:

- How to deal with keeping this group open and accessible and working well the same time. How to communicate that you can join it, support it and how to leave a space for different ideas and expressions and not lose the feeling that you know exactly with whom you work with and who should be involved in the decision making process
- How to create new way of working in this group in the sense of who you support and how to overcome mechanisms that people already get used to.

- Never Alone - A zine about supporting prisoners by those on the outside. Produced by the Empty Cages Collective and Bristol ABC. Prison Industrial Complex
- Captive Genders: Transembodiment and Prison Industrial Complex - Book about gender and the P.I.C. An important read.
- Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex: Activism, Arts, and Educational Alternatives_ Book about how to creatively challenge the prison industrial complex.
- Close Supervision Centres - Torture Units in the UK #2_ Publication produced by Bristol ABC about Close Supervision Centres.
- The Prison Works. Occasional texts on the roles of prison and prison labour - By Joe Black/Bra Bros. Published by the Campaign Against Prison Slavery and Brighton Anarchist Black Cross

Prison Abolition

- Abandoned: Abolishing female prisons to prevent sexual abuse and herald an end to incarceration - Article by David W. Fran. Exploring examples in the US and the UK.
- Abolition Now! Ten years of strategy and struggle against the prison industrial complex - Short book of different articles around prison abolition, mainly US focused but still very real and inspiring.
- Are Prisons Obsolete? - Incredible book by Angela Yvonne Davis, 2003, Seven Stories Press .
- Instead of Prisons: Handbook for Abolitionists_ Comprehensive text on alternatives to prison and the decarceration movement

- Creative Interventions - Toolkit to stop interpersonal violence
- Furthering Transformative Justice, Building Healthy Communities - An interview with Philly Stands Up
- Towards Transformative Justice -pdf produced by Generation Five
- What About the Rapists? - Zine Collection of articles representing different approaches to the problem of harm and domination in our communities, from transformative justice-based accountability processes to retributive-based acts of survivor-led retaliation

Racism and Colonialism

- Beyond Walls and Cages - Prisons, borders and global crisis Important book linking migration and the P.I.C. Edited by Jenna M Lloyd, Matt Mitchelson and Andrew Burridge, 2012.
- The New Abolitionists: (Neo)slave Narratives And Contemporary Prison Writings Written by prisoners about the contemporary prison system in the US

Prisoner Writing and Organising

- Solidarity Without Prejudice - Long term prisoner John Bowden asks what criteria could be used when supporting prisoners
- Tenacious, Art and writings by women in prison - Regular zine coming out of the US produced by prisoners
- Thoughts on Prisoner Support - Written by long term prisoner John Bowden Prisoner Support and Solidarity

I think that the first huge benefit on the new years eve that we made was worth remembering - this was my favourite moment.

…

I got involved in ABC because I have an inspiring friend who made me aware of the importance of supporting people on the inside " and I saw how few people give time to it. Our group spend a lot of time fundraising (gigs/ meals/raffles) and then a small amount of time quickly giving that money away to groups all over the world that are in need because of state repression. We organise letter writing and demos and act as occasional rent-a-mob for other prison groups that we may or may not be a part of. It's important because prisons are incredibly isolating and so staying in contact with people on the inside can make a massive difference to peoples lives

ABC means solidarity to me, the threat of prison is a relentless form of state intimidation and repression for many people and so our solidarity must also be relentless!

The challenges have been trying to make people write letters – its unglamourous work and often doesn't get as much support as it should. My favourite abc moment was hearing first hand from an ex-prisoner how the letters of a friend of mine and ex-abc-mum changed his life.

The sense of support in the group has been memorable, and it keeps me going with the work that we do. I have also been blown away at the international solidarity that gets spread around through the ABC network. This is a rare thing and should be fucking cherished! Prisoner support also keeps me going with wider prison struggles – whilst our long term aims are to bring down the prison system helping people on the inside in various ways can bring little victories which are important!

One piece of advice is don't get sad if you don't get a reply to your letter, and don't let that be a sign that the other person doesn't want more letters!

...

Somewhere around 2009-2010 it became clear to many of us in the anarchist movement in our country that we will get repressed by the state sooner or later. We started ABC to get organised before the state strikes. After almost a year of existence, we did get in trouble with the state with massive wave of arrests and detentions of anarchists and antifascists.

The main focus of the group is supporting prisoners and people on trial. This is also the main part of spendings. Apart from that, we publish our own brochures on security culture, how not to talk to police and so on. We also run our website where we try to track all the repressions against anarchists and antifascists around the country. We are also one of the groups trying to push the international week of solidarity with anarchist prisoners.

For me, ABC is somehow this wall you build in front of the repressive regimes that allows activists to do their stuff without worrying about the necessity to gather money or bother about organising your own solidarity campaign in case of repression.

Apart from that, the value of ABC is also in it's political core of solidarity, where support is not just humanitarian aid, but a political statement that unites us in struggle.

Our challenges have been surviving! For all the years the group has existed, it's been underground with invitation only membership. With that in mind it is worth mentioning that we try to act in most of the cases without bringing the ABC brand to the table as it might potentially cause some troubles for those who are calling themselves ABC members. But those who need to know, know it anyway.

Another challenge is always the collection of money. It might be one of the most boring jobs ever. At the same time, if you do it properly it might turn into fun. But it is anyway a real challenge not to end up broke after another wave of repressions that the state starts against the movement.

> "Our task is to care together as we struggle together. By pushing forth the complexity of experience and realities that arise in caring for those who are mentally and physically ill, traumatized, dying, survivors of intimate violence and incarceration, addicted, suffering from chronic pain, struggling against the imposition of binary gender, and working in the care and medical industries our movements deepen our relationships with one another and construct new fronts for revolutionary struggle. It is these everyday realities that need to be considered on the long arc of sustained organizing and revolutionary change"

Resources

In this chapter you will find links to materials in the English language, which are useful before, during and after prison.

We assume this category as very broad to think of; a category for a thick book about literature, films, and practical knowledge. Now, due to the context of a zine, we will relate accordingly to zines, films and some books. The choice of materials we present and link to in this chapter is influenced by our personal preferences and experiences, and relates to our organizing in so-called European and North American contexts. We also copied some brief descriptions for films, represented in pop culture media. Some of the films may seem cheesy and you could be surprised why some of them were included on the list.

Watch, read, wonder, explore, think. Sometimes you can find great material to analyze in something you would not expect to be anything else than a waste of time.

Zines and Books

Transformative Justice

- Destroy machismo‼ We can encourage prisoners to write honestly about how they are feeling, make sure in workshops and talks we talk about the reality of prison and not try to dismiss people as weak if they are finding situations harder or expressing their vulnerability more visibly
- Don't judge people for drinking or drug use if this is connected to trauma or repression, everyone is at a different point of their journey in healing and finding coping tools
- Centre the person who is experiencing repression and make sure they have as much power and agency as possible. A lot of traumatisation relates to feeling powerless. Make sure anyone you support is actively involved in decision making about the support they want and need.
- Valuing people might involve: challenging multiple and intersecting forms of oppression in groups, supporting people that have experienced abuse or violence, squashing machismo, having support for folks experiencing repression, supporting people that have burnt out etc. Basically not treating each other like we are disposable.
- Having fun‼! Trying to make tasks enjoyable, like cooking a fundraising dinner and listening to music, or taking snacks to court etc.
- Express care for each other in any way you can. Whether it is sending each other silly memes or bringing cakes to a meeting. These small acts of care can really help people feel loved and appreciated.

These are just a few ideas! Explore more in your ABC groups about how you can make this work a little bit easier by caring for each other better.

In the words of Kevin Van Meter:

I think the most inspiring moment was when we organised an infotable with letter writting at one of the big events. A really young girl came with her mother to write letters to prisoners. Her mother was crying, while the daughter was writing something on the postcard. I think moments like that boost my faith in humankind even if sometimes it crumbles.

What keeps me going? I think there is this egoistic approach that if something happens to me, I would love people to help me out. This is one of the reasons, and the other thing is that through the years of work in ABC it is becoming clearer what solidarity means and how important it is. Not just the words, but actions that move the walls around the people and make repressions a little bit less successful.

My advice to new people - Ask other groups if you are hesitant about how to start. Some support from collectives now far from you might help you understand how the things are working way faster and you can start spreading your solidarity very soon! And try it! It is a lot of fun although from the very beginning it might look overwhelming.

Just start doing and trying to support people and it will give you this burst of doing something that makes difference. Starting from the small letters and ending up supporting people during the trial. Every drop in the ocean of struggle counts.

…

I actually first received support from an ABC when I was in prison. This solidarity and support from the group made a huge impression on me, and when I was released and then finally free of these state conditions, I joined the group.

Our ABC group has engaged in many activities over the years. At some points, we have friends and comrades we know personally who are in prison, and our work may be more directly supporting them – like prison visits, writing letters, fundraising etc. Other

times, our work is more focused on international solidarity. We try to organise at least one monthly event; this could be anything from a vegan burger night to raise money, to hosting a speaker who is touring and talking about a certain situation. We also try to keep our website updated with news from around the world. We have produced a number of publications and also write articles. Fortunately, there is another group in our area that focuses on supporting defendants before prison, so our main focus can be supporting people in prison. We also get involved in national campaigns against prison expansion and more. We also organise actions as part of international days of action.

I feel that ABC is beautiful and necessary for many reasons. I feel it is really important that the anarchist movement builds up the infrastructure that enables us to be resilient to repression. It's clear from history that effective struggles will always be met by state and capitalist forces.

We need to learn from history and be prepared. It's useful to have ABC groups in existence so that when the shit hits the fan, we are ready and can respond. It's also meaningful to be organising international solidarity and constantly be developing and strengthening these relationships. For myself, on a very personal level, ABC gave me hope and strength in prison. Knowing that oneday I could get out and meet these kind people who supported me really meant the world. It kept me going and it gave power to my heart knowing these people existed!

I think our main challenge has been finding enough people willing to organise in a dedicated way. It is very easy to find people to help with certain events, like doing cooking, but it has been harder at times to have enough people who will do this more boring or invisible work like checking emails or updating the prisoner list. There have also been some challenges with the gendered division of labour but this is improving!

Sometimes, the emotional work involved in ABC can be challenging too. Like when you hear from comrades who have been

- Organising accessible counselling or fundraising to pay for a counsellor for people experiencing repression so that people have solid, reliable support and the weight of emotional labour is not all on each other
- Medical and health support - for example, connecting with local herbalists who can make herbal medicines to help bodies cope with stress, like the J20 who received support from the herbal community in the US during their stressful trial
- Creating collective models of care for childcare, elder care, supporting people with chronic illnesses etc (and respite for carers)
- Creating face-to-face time together to work together so we are less isolated and feel more connected to each other. Invest time in building your friendships!
- Working collectively especially when shit gets distressing (so we all feel more supported)
- Ensuring appropriate decision making in groups so people feel able to share their feelings, opinions and ideas
- Autonomy – building a group where folk feel control and agency over their own work and tasks
- Having regular check-ins with your group about how you are all feeling/ coping and support you might need right now
- A culture where everyone calls each other out/flags up when the pace is unsustainable or potentially harming each other
- Paying attention to the partners of prisoners who often do the most support work practically and emotionally, while coping with their own grief and loss about their partners imprisonment

- Encouraging regular time off organising for each other, making people feel supported that they can take a step back if they need.
- Have adequate expenses policies/ financial support when appropriate to support people to participate - this might mean using ABC funds to pay for healthy meals when touring so we are not just getting sick doing this work because we cannot afford to pay for lunch.
- Ensure solid introductions to how groups work/how to do things and give support for new people. Create opportunities for people to learn new skills.
- Pay attention to the division of labour in your group and don't take each other for granted! Be especially aware of race, gender, class and other factors that can often deeply affect who does what.
- Be aware of who is often setting the pace in the group and check in with each other if it's sustainable for you all.
- Talk about how you communicate as a crew and what you expect from each other. Find a way of getting things done and tracking your action points so it's not just one person reminding everyone, which can be exhausting and disempowering for people.
- Organise fun/nice/adventurous opportunities for yourselves, like traveling to an event in a different city, or doing a speaking tour in a different city. These 'perks' can help keep us going when we may have done years and years of heavy things like endless prison visits.
- Getting training for our groups e.g. Workshops, courses, reading groups, gatherings and skillshares (especially around trauma and burnout prevention)

tortured or beaten in prison, or are just struggling with imprisonment. Organising can help you to feel less powerless, but you still feel like you just want to go there and destroy the walls and get these people out! I think this feeling of 'not doing enough' is something that many people feel who are engaged in struggles, its not exclusive to ABC.

My favourite moment is I think definitely visiting one prison on the New Year's Eve solidarity demos and making noise outside. Inside the women were shouting back, and banging on the doors – and it's like the whole prison came alive with noises of defiance. It was amazing! We later heard from a woman in this prison at the time who said it really 'kicked off' in the prison that night and everyone their felt amazed that people would come on NYE to support them. What keeps me going? It sounds really cheesy to say things like "Until All Are Free" or "Until Every Cage is Empty" but I really feel this way. That, we simply cannot stop until all the cages and prisons in this world are destroyed.

What keeps me going is knowing that these systems of oppression and exploitation still exist and that the necessity to fight remains. Emotionally, what keeps me going is friendships that I have gained through the ABC network. There are some incredibly inspiring people active in this struggle and it is an honour to know them.

My advice for new groups is to ask for support when you need it – contact one of the longer running groups and simply ask for help. We have all made so many mistakes and learned so much over the years that people are happy to help others to get started. Also, make sure you take care of yourself and each other! And fuck macho bullshit :)

...

For some years, I was aware about the existence of such a group in our city. I rather felt it is something super-secret and to me it was a kind of 7th level of anarchism or something. Now it sounds

really ridiculous, but I guess it was so because it was vital to not talk about who is doing what and who is who, you know.

My involvement started with wave of repression which also hit me and my comrades, and anti-repression work got much wider scale than before and involved more people. After some time, I realised that actually we are doing things which ABC is doing for a long time, and the only difference is that I don't meet other people from the group, who don't necessarily do public things and don't want many people to know about their involvement.

So after some time I got closer and took some responsibilities that I wanted to take care of. It was simple because we are just bunch of friends and see each other very often, and it is actually hard to name the day when I got involved as our ABC group doesn't have ritual for accepting new people, like oaths around the campfire when it's a full moon – which is really nice ritual I think..!

My favourite moment - I think I really liked how we were inventing nicknames for all these police and state assholes who were trying to send us to prison. Making jokes about all of them while writing an article and sometimes trying to write it in the most funny way we could – I think I could count so many hours that we spent laughing about the police.

And I think all these organising moments were not how many people imagine activism or how actually activism looks like – something boring and taking a lot of time. Because it is not activism. Our case is a bunch of friends, cooking food together and having a good time, and meanwhile actually doing things. But also I got to say that there are things which start to be hard after some time, like publishing things on the website – especially if you have dozens of other things to do.

It is good to share these responsibilities and not to create these hierarchies, I mean, for example, really try to avoid a situation when there is only one or two people who know how to put things on a website or has an access to e-mail, because these things are very routine or they start to be routine very soon. So share it, and when

- Investing time in ourselves - this means investing energy in ourselves beyond our political work, this might involve studying, or learning self-defence, gardening and more. Whatever we also yearn for, we need to cultivate it too.

- Being aware of our risk factors - knowing your signs when you are teetering on the edge, learning to listen to your body and take action to meet your needs, so that you can set better boundaries with projects and the amount of support work you can realistically do

- Connecting with other people - especially those who have a shared sense of understanding of what you are going through, or have been through

- Trying to cultivate a sense of joy and wonder - check out the book 'Joyful Militancy' which shares a different understanding of joy (which is not necessarily skipping in the meadows or even happiness) but more of a becoming who we are in working for liberation

Building Care into our Collectives

A lot of the 'self-care' suggestions create some idea that it's our fault if we burn out because we haven't taken care of ourselves well. While our personal actions for sure contribute to our health and survival, they are part of a much bigger system than ourselves - from how our collectives share labour to how capitalism destroys our access to healthcare, and so forth. So no blame or shame - let's just all care for each other better so we can better destroy what destroys us!

Here are some suggestions and ideas for what ABC groups can do to take care of each better in our groups:

- Changes in identity – you may feel disconnected from certain identities that you once held dear (such as calling yourself an anarchist or feminist). You may find that you can't cope with organising any more and this affects your sense of who you are.
- Changes in beliefs related to major psychological needs (e.g., beliefs regarding safety, control, trust, esteem, and intimacy). In an ABC context, this might mean that perhaps you no longer trust certain friends because they let you down while you were in prison. Or it can mean that after police infiltration that intimate relationships feel impossible.

Taking Care of Ourselves - Some Ideas

Resources on vicarious trauma suggest some strategies that can help. These include:

- Escaping - taking time off, watching movies, reading etc
- Resting - making sure we get adequate rest and respite from it all
- Playing - Doing fun things, exercising our bodies etc
- Nurturing a sense of meaning and hope - finding things that keep us inspired, that could be reading about historical comrades, going to gatherings, spending time with particular people etc.
- Mourning our losses - grief is such a huge part of ABC work at times, finding a way to mourn in a healthy and nourishing way is super important
- Marking transitions - this may include celebrating small achievements, like having a successful event or completing a new zine, or reflecting at the end of the year

you feel that this time it was hard for you, share it with people in group and make yourself a small reward. I thing it's a tip for how to make things a bit more inspiring.

…

I'm doing anti-repression-stuff for nearly 18 years and, as an anarchist, I was always interested in organising as an ABC group and doing anti-prison-projects. There was an ABC group somewhere else in the country in the late 90s/ beginning of 2000, when I just started by myself doing things in the radical left and I had some loose contact.

Later, I was organised in an antirepression-group that did some kind of legal support service for demonstrations and so on. I left this group because of some big differences concerning the political goals we are fighting for and my personal affections to radical theory and practice. Then some people in my home town started an ABC group in 2008. It took some years because of different personal and political issues but then I joined them.

One of my favourite moments was when we organised the Anti-Prison-Days some years ago and an anarchist long-termprisoner joined the meeting. He was 16 years behind bars and was released 10 days before he traveled to the meeting. It was really impressive to meet him and listen to his words during the discussions. He was so open-minded and talked about his experiences in prison. For me, it was the affirmation of why I'm fighting against the prison industry and that we are right.

What keeps me going? It's fucking important. Yes, it's hard work and nothing fun about that, but it has to be pushed forward. We are not just doing antirepression work, we are enemies of the state and capitalism and ABC is just one part of a lot. I can not stop. There will be always repression as long there is the state, so we will continue.

My advice to people starting - do your work and fight. It's not a hobby or some kind of project that you can quit when you are interested in something new or more fascinating.

For me, it makes no sense to start an ABC group and then stop with it some years later because nobody is interested in the things you are doing or the fights you are going through. Of course not. Anti-Repression is never some fun-stuff. It's hard work. And it's hard to continue. But don't give up. Some small breaks, ok, but don't give up. It's also a story of trust and dependability for other people in the same or similar fights.

…

This work started for me almost 20 years ago, when I started to get involved with a quite active punk scene. At this time, there was an active ABC group in the south of this country and one of the people was also doing a DIY Punk Zine and I ordered it. And with and within the zine was also ABC Material. I immediately had the feeling that this is important and got drawn to this topic. And so a friend and I made an ABC Solidarity Benefit Compilation on Tape. We spread and printed flyers and pamphlets about ABC and prisoners. Over the next years, the topic was still important for me and I did some solidarity stuff for ABC groups but it would take almost 10 more years to start our own group in my city in 2008.

Prison or Anti-prison perspectives were not a topic in the anti-authoritarian movement at all and the anti-repression groups did not have an anti-prison/antiauthoritarian perspective. We wanted to change this.

In the first years, our main focus was to spread the ideas of an anarchist view against prisons and make prisons/ repression and solidarity a bigger topic within the anti-authoritarian movement. After a while, the banners on solidarity demonstrations changed from "freedom for all political prisoners" to "freedom for all prisoners" ;) haha. But we did a lot of talks about why we as anarchists are against prisons and that there can't be a free society with prisons. A lot of people within the movement seemed to have a hard time with these ideas at least at first. We also did an Infotour through the country about this topic.

- Feeling like you never have time or energy for yourself.
- Feeling disconnected from loved ones, even when communicating with them
- Increased conflict in relationships
- General social withdrawal
- Acting out/exhibiting the "silencing response" – finding yourself unable to pay attention to other's distressing stories because they seem overwhelming and incomprehensible, and directing people to talk about less distressing material
- Decreased interest in activities that used to bring pleasure, enjoyment, or relaxation. Sexual difficulties.
- Irritable, intolerant, agitated, impatient, needy, and/or moody. Impulsivity.
- Increased dependencies or addictions involving nicotine, alcohol, food, sex, shopping , internet, and/or other substances

There can also be changes in how we see and experience the world :

- Changes in spirituality and beliefs around meaning and purpose. We may start to question what we believe or lose hope or lose our sense of purpose. Our political worldviews and beliefs may change over time too in response to the ongoing trauma we witness. For example, for many going to prison may increase their rage and keep them going in their fight. For many others, prison will make them feel that fighting back is pointless and hopeless and they may abandon their social movements that were once a huge part of their life.

One way this is recognised is in the concept of 'vicarious trauma'. Vicarious trauma has been described by the Headington Insitute as the "process of change that happens because you care about other people that have been hurt, and feel committed or responsible to help them. Over time this process can lead to changes in your psychological, physical and spiritual wellbeing."

Increasingly trauma conversation and writing acknowledges the effects of long-term and complex trauma, beyond one-off traumatic incidents like a car accident. It shines a light on the potential cumulative consequences of bringing other people's grief, fear, anger, and despair into our own awareness and experience over a longer period of time. Some of these changes might be noticed through different signs.

Physical and physiological signs can include :

- Hyperarousal symptoms (e.g., nightmares, difficulty concentrating, being easily startled, sleep difficulties)
- Repeated thoughts or images regarding traumatic events, especially when you are trying not to think about it
- Feeling numb
- Feeling unable to tolerate strong emotions
- Increased sensitivity to violence
- Cynicism, Anger, Disgust, Fear
- Generalized despair and hopelessness, and loss of idealism
- Guilt regarding your own survival and/ or pleasure

Behaviour and relationship signs may include :

- Difficulty setting boundaries

We made and printed flyers and zines about prison related topics, made talks about current cases and prisoners and always collected money to support prisoners and other groups. We took part in international gatherings and also organised Anti-Prison-Days.

We participated in solidarity actions and since 6 years now, we organise a solidarity-festival once a year. Since 4 years, we publish a monthly printed newsletter. We have a regular updated website with current events and an incomplete list of prisoners.

And we have an always growing book and zine distro. Sometimes, we manage to travel around and give talks about ABC related topics and/or the history of Anarchist Black Cross in general. We are always happy to get asked for doing talks.

We consider ourselves more an antiprison group than an anti-repression group, but also do anti-repression work. Since about one year, we do a monthly letter writing workshop.

I think ABC is important because think it's an important part of an anarchist struggle. We have to support (our) prisoners and also have to keep the struggle against this prison society going. ABC can be a useful label under which different groups can also connect more easily. There is a lot of material to use from other ABC groups and the ABC also has a long history we can look back and try to learn but also take inspiration from.

Most people who are somehow involved with an anti-authoritarian movement or just the punk scene know what ABC is. There are punk-festivals all over Europe in solidarity with ABC groups who want to support this cause even if they are not part of groups themselves.

On the other side, I think it is important to get organised and have anarchist structures to support prisoners, which keep on going and not form new from case to case. And also not to completely rely on the German Rote Hilfe, for example, who managed to print in the last two years at least two articles in the Rote Hilfe-Newspaper celebrating authoritarian communism (who killed and incarcerated anarchists/antiauthoritarians). Of course many of the

"sub-groups" who are part of Rote Hilfe are not like this, but I think this overreliance in Germany on this structure is dangerous. And it also shows somehow that we are everywhere! ;) And that we are connected in a loose international network.

The challenges have been to keep going and not to burn out. In this line of work so to speak there is not so many moments of success, where you see immediately a result. We started with a group which was more than twice the size than we are now. Many people lost interest in the group, the ideas, the struggle… But I guess otherwise the usual stuff like life in a capitalist society in general.

The best moment is often its just a letter you get from inside prison. The last two years we also got invited to talk at a festival about our work and they wrote some really nice words about our group and our work and why they do a benefit especially for us. It felt really nice to get appreciated for the work you do. It's not why we do it, but to be honest it felt just really good.

What keeps us going? It is just really important and it's just part of our struggle as anarchists. It sometimes does not feel like much what you can do, but then you get letters from prisoners and they still have so much fight in them and they let you feel how important your support is to them. And most of the time you never met them but you read their words and you feel this strong bond and affinity. I personally get a lot of power and energy back from these letters.

Also meeting people over the years who are involved since the 80s and even 70s in anti-prison-struggles is always very inspiring for me. Or people who do this work living in far more repressive countries. And their experiences and how they manage. And there is still prisons and capitalism and no liberated society, so there is also still the need of ABC. ;)

My advice to new people is don't do it because it's cool or trendy, or because you think it gets you scene credibility or shit like this. Don't do this if you see this as "activism", what you do for a while get disillusioned because things don't work as you want them, or prisoners are difficult or you just get bored and just quit again. An-

these divisions rise from? What has to be done to bring this discussion to the broader public?

- What can be done to keep your group activities more sustainable?

Go on and talk to your comrades. Share ideas, make things happen, organise – the sky is the limit.

Taking Care of Each Other

ABC work can be hard, stressful and emotionally be challenging at times. Seeing our friends and comrades be arrested, beaten, have their houses raided by police, sit through trials, go to prison and more can be seriously tough. Many people in ABC groups will also be active in other groups so may be simultaneously experiencing repression and supporting others to survive repression.

Prisoner support work can mean an intimacy with death. We may lose the people we love due to medical neglect, suicide or even at the hands (or guns) of the police. Coping with grief and managing chronic stress are important skills for ABC organisers.

Many people burn out from prisoner support and anti-repression work and this is why taking care of ourselves and each other is super important! This section of the zine aims to explore this topic and share some resources.

Vicarious trauma & ABC work

As anarchists, as people resisting the dehumanising nature of capitalism and the state, we see a lot of fucked up shit. We may experience this ourselves directly (like prison), or we may support people we are close to surviving certain chronically stressful and traumatic situations. Or we may just be reading and writing about what other people are going through. Either way, we are exposed to a lot of heavy and upsetting things and it is obvious this is going to begin to affect us (otherwise we wouldn't be human).

- Consider the idea of making benefit events for collecting money for your project and/or for prisoner support. How can you make such events more effective and get more people involved? How can you connect such events to other ideas and discussion you've been having with your group?
- Look out for events that you could participate in as a group and present your ideas, perspective and work that you are doing.
- Has there been any large and/or known state repression cases in your context that you are familiar with and which could be a lesson for more people in your area and beyond? How can you make in-depth analysis of what happened and what it can potentially teach you?
- Think of starting cooperative and common projects with other ABC groups and other friendly collectives near your area and even further.
- What are some possible short-, middle- and long-term goals for your ABC group that might exist?
- What are the practical ways in which you could connect your ABC work outside of prison with things that are happening on the inside? How can that can empower and widen the struggle?
- What are the limitations of your ABC group?
- Is there anything that can bring people in your ABC group closer together as friends and comrades? What could empower you as a project, or as a group of active individuals?
- What is your relation to the dichotomy of political and social, especially in relation to 'political' and 'social' prisoners? What are the limitations of such divisions and where do

archism and solidarity isn't a hobby. People rely on you and your support.

Give yourself realistic goals (for the start). I mean of course, the anarchist revolution the main goal but you know what I mean. ;) You will need a lot of stamina and it will take a lot of energy. Maybe get in contact with other ABC groups, there is a lot you can learn from their experiences. You don't have to start at zero.

International Days of Solidarity

Many international days and weeks of action take place throughout the year in solidarity with prisoners. This list represents a few of those that take place. These days can help keep prisoner support active and visible in our movements and struggles - but we are not limited to them.

ABC groups organise many other events and actions at any day of the year. Shared days of action help us to build momentum, share resources and gain strength for particular prisoners and struggles. These days are the same each year, but many new days and weeks of action are announced spontaneously when solidarity is urgently needed.

New York ABC also produce a poster each month of political prisoner birthdays. This is a great resource for regular letter writing events: `https://nycabc.wordpress.com`

Trans Prisoner Day of Action and Solidarity - January 22

This grassroots project was initiated by Marius Mason, a trans prisoner in Texas, US. This annual event is being lead by trans prisoners and their supporters from around the world. It is a chance for those on the outside to remember those behind bars, give real solidarity and support and raise awareness about issues facing trans prisoners. It is a chance for those on the inside to have a voice and organise together. `https://transprisoners.net`

International Women's Day - March 8

While this day continues to be whitewashed and channeled into liberal and capitalist feminisms, many anarchists and others use this day to fight against patriarchy and remember the radical history of Women's Day. ABC groups have organised letter writing events and info nights about incarcerated women worldwide.

International Day Against Police Brutality – March 15

The International Day Against Police Brutality is observed on March 15. It first began in 1997 as an initiative of the Montreal based Collective Opposed to Police Brutality and the Black Flag group in Switzerland. Acceptance of March 15 as a focal day of solidarity against police brutality varies from one place to another.

Palestinian Prisoners Day - April 17

During this day, people worldwide organise rallies, events and actions in solidarity with Palestinian Political Prisoners. Every year, Palestinian prisoners carry out an open-ended hunger strike, while those on the outside seek to amplify their voices. http://samidoun.net

International Workers' Day of May Day - May 1

May Day is held in commemoration of four anarchists executed in the US in 1886 and all the thousands of others who have struggled for the working classes. Many groups in this period organise solidarity actions and use it as an opportunity to highlight prison labour and all the incarcerated workers in prison.

Read more about the history here: https://libcom.org/history/1886- haymarket-martyrs-mayday

International Day of Solidarity with Long-term Anarchist Prisoners - June 11

Each year, June 11th serves as a day for us to remember our longest imprisoned anarchist comrades through words, actions and ongoing material support. The June 11 website shares many resources and a listing of prisoners who value increased support in this period. People are encouraged to take actions all over the world and report them back. Each year, a zine is created of writings and reports. https://june11.noblogs.org

which passes by in a police car on your street, the papers, the courts, the whole so-called public order etc. Not all repression is visible: some of them are so much part of our everyday life that we rather don't consider them to be repressions in our usual understanding, whether the state is opening a large criminal case against our comrades or it's cops are beating us up on the streets. Our desire for liberation is equally in conflict with 'small' and 'big' repressions, and prisons uphold all of them.

Practically then, think of ways how you as a group can work with all of that. Basically, keeping ABC group going means working with it as with a kind of a project. But there is no recipe for every group, on what has to be done to keep going. Before setting particular goals, try to talk to each other inside your group. Discussion can be much more useful than a manual. Discuss these or any other ideas that you find meaningful:

- What kind of anti-repressive or abolitionist work is missing in our local area?
- What is the new thing that your ABC group could come up with from an anarchist tactical perspective of fighting prisons and the State that hasn't been present in your area and could be meaningful?
- What kind of projects or initiatives inspire you?
- Are there any legal support groups that you can be in contact with? Does it make sense to start one?
- How could you make happen some periodic educational events, connected to raising the level of security culture and awareness? Are there ways how you could make such events more interesting, interactive and easier? What can be done to get more people interested?

prisons, but also brings a clear abolitionist perspective to ABC's long term goals and everyday struggle.

It's clear: we absolutely need to destroy all prisons; this institution of control that takes a role of being a connecting glue in relation to other systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, class or racism. Prisons never solved any problems and only created countless numbers of them, destroyed so many lives, cultures and beautiful human and animal beings.

However, we all know it's not easy as that. Destroying prisons is not a single act of liberating violence, but rather a complicated and long-term process of building other kinds of relationships within society. It is about moving our mutual understanding of punishment, prison and life without them towards an uncompromisingly deep and radical analysis of how they work, what can be done do destroy them and what are the social relations that we want. All three are just proposals, there are many ways of how to put it. But of course, all of these go together. We can't create an analysis as first, and then destroy prisons, and then think of how we want to live. We do it all in one piece, and that is what makes our abolitionist ideas strong.

The positions presented above also means a damn huge amount of work to be done. And that's why your local ABC group should go on. As destroying prisons is a hell of an effort, it has to be said also that repressions never stop – obviously, that is quite against an example of an ABC group that appears as repressions come and falls apart as they go.

What Might Be Done to Keep an ABC Group Going?

First of all, try think of repression in a wider context. It might seem that repression is a relatively short-term situation but repression is actually a part of The Situation. That means that The Repression is always present. The State is always out there and it's control over people lives itself means repression and social warfare. Whatever it is: a fine, the laws and the whole mechanism and collective illusion that make them work, the borders, a criminal case, the cop

International Day of Solidarity with Eric King - June 28

Eric King is an anarchist prisoner in the US who was sentenced to 10 years in prison on June 28th 2016 for an attempted firebombing of a government official's office. Since his arrest and subsequent incarceration, he has been extremely isolated from his loved ones and has repeatedly been targeted by the guards. He has spent many months in solitary confinement. This day of action is to build support for Eric in his final years of surviving prison. https://supportericking.org

International Day of Solidarity with Anti-Fascist Prisoners - July 25

The July 25 International Day of Solidarity with Antifascist Prisoners originated in 2014 as the Day of Solidarity with Jock Palfreeman, an Australian man serving a 20-year sentence in Bulgaria for defending two Romani men from an attack by fascist football hooligans. It is now expanded to support all anti-fascist prisoners. Groups are encouraged to organise solidarity actions, events, fundraisers, letter writings and more. Find a list of prisoners here: https://nycantifa.wordpress.com/globalantifa-prisoner-list

Prisoners Justice Day - August 10

August 10th is a day set aside to remember all those who have died unnatural deaths inside Canadian prisons. The day of action started in Canada in 1974 when prisoner Edward Nolan bled to death at Millhaven Maximum Security Prison in Bath, Ontario. This date has now become a marking point for prison struggle across the world. http://prisonjustice.ca

International week of solidarity with anarchist prisoners 23 - 30 August

This is a global week of action dedicated to anarchist prisoners. Solidarity can express itself in many forms; from graffiti to attacks to letter writing evenings. A collective poster and call-out is written and shared online and then groups make autonomous actions and can send reports for the website if they wish. The beginning of the week was chosen because of the historical execution date of

Sacco and Vanzetti, two ItalianAmerican anarchists, in 1927. They were convicted with a very little amount of evidence, and many still consider that they were punished because of their anarchist views. https://solidarity.international

International Trans Day of Remembrance - 28 November

The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialise those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. It honours the dead, and fights for the living. Many anti-prison groups have taken actions against prisons on these days, remembering trans prisoners who have died inside. https://tdor.info

New Year's Eve Noise Demonstrations

It has become tradition, that on the noisiest night of the year - we also make noise for prisoners. Internationally, noise demonstrations outside of prisons are a way to remember those who are held captive by the state and a way to show solidarity with imprisoned comrades and loved ones. We come together to break the loneliness and isolation. Demos take place all over the world to let prisoners know they are not alone.

Fundraising: Top Tips

Fundraising is one of the biggest parts of our activity. Whether we want it or not, a lot of solidarity work requires money. Starting from lawyers for the legal aid and ending up with parcels to the prisoners and support for those that are at the financial bottom due to repressions.

Some people find it to be a nasty business, others turn it into quite a positive experience. It is up to you to decide which approach you take but it should be clear that if you are taking your ABC activity seriously you won't be able to avoid fundraising.

Here are some tips from our own experience on how you can make some money. Some of it might not fit into reality due to political repressions. This list is for updating for sure. So if you or

How to Keep an ABC Group Going

One could say: the fuel that ABC goes on with, is active work with the case of repression that group has to deal with. That is to say, when repression is not happening and people took security culture into their blood and heads, antirepressive groups like ABC should go into sleeping mode, if not just disappear. People just stand up like after the film finishes in the cinema, and folks go home since the action is over.

That is also the case sometimes; some contemporary ABC groups stop being active after the most visible and actual part of repressions that are happening at their places are over. But it doesn't mean it should always go this way.

There are plenty of reasons why ABC groups would stop existing after repressions. For example, very often people who are involved in ABC group are part of other projects, and starting an ABC group might be a practical necessity to organize against repression, especially if no anti-repressive groups already exist. Among other reasons, there might be some traumatic experiences that were connected to the support work that had been done. All of this is understandable. But many of us who participated in ABC noticed a continuing need to keep it going. Why so?

ABC as a type of organisation, and as part of tactical ways of how anarchists have been fighting against states and supporting those who got caught, has a great tradition. And the Black Cross organisational philosophy is sill an abolitionist philosophy.

More than 100 years ago, anarchists in the same type of organisation that had a different name for a while, were actively opposing the tsarist regime, and just few years later they became an enemy to the Bolshevik state, same as to all other states states on Earth. Coming through both Tsarist and Bolshevik prisons and executions back then, and today fighting against prisons and state repressions all over the world, Anarchist Black Cross as an idea gains not only sad but true historical perspective on revolution, the State and its

Monthly donations

Many antiauthoritarian and anti-fascist groups have the option for people to donate regularly, such as £3 per month. This creates a sustainable income source and is a good model to replicate if you have a bank account and this structure. It can be more difficult if you are informal without an account (many groups do not have a formal account for security reasons).

Anarchist Defence Fund

An International Anarchist Defence Fund was launched in 2018. It collects funds from members who join and can then contribute to decision making in response to applications for the fund. The collective solidarity structure provides support to anarchists around the world who are persecuted or find themselves in a difficult life situation because of their political ideas or activities. https://afund.antirep.net

Last words

Whether it is a dinner or a party, infotour or single presentation it is important to understand that fundraising events are also building up an atmosphere of solidarity inside of the anarchist movement. If today people are taking care of comrade A. when he/she/they are facing repressions, than it means that tomorrow nobody is going to give up! This feeling of support from your comrades is extremely important in building up revolutionary community that is embarking on the way of revolution.

So don't hesitate. If you don't have experience – ask other groups or your friends to help you out. Be creative and embrace the hard parts of fundraising work just to enjoy the good parts of it. Disclaimer: with this list we don't want to list only legal options. Please remember that this zine doesn't cancel more traditional ways of fundraising that anarchists exercised in previous centuries: for example expropriation ;)

your group have something to add – feel free to write us back with your experience.

Fundraising evening/Presentation

These are some kinds of presentations, discussions or workshops that are connected with the matter for which you are fundraising. For example, a presentation on repression against activists protesting against G20, that might be a platform to raise solidarity funds. These are quite good in case you want to collect money for causes that are not really present in your region. Through these events you can inform people and potentially inspire people to start being active in support of this or that cause. However, you shouldn't expect a lot of money from these kinds of events, as people are normally not eager to donate money directly after a presentation. The interest in donating might be encouraged with some materials for sale/donation on the topic. Even such things as t-shirts or patches might be a small connection to the topic for some people.

You can also go away from a traditional presentation format and organize a solidarity dinner. Some groups are reporting that well organized dinner might raise more funds and attract more people than just a presentation.

Solidarity calls

Sometimes it is worth to giving a shout around the anarchist movement for help. It might be that the other groups have more possibilities to access funds than you do. For example, western countries have more wealth than eastern or southern countries.

In that case, such a call can provoke other people to take action in their own town and raise funds for you. Do not underestimate the power of solidarity – you might be positively surprised how people are eager to help those they don't know, but with whom they share ideas.

Party

This is one of the most popular ways of fundraising in western countries. In most of the cases you can openly advertise the cause of the party and give people possibility to party for cause. It is a

great way of raising money, because people are eager to spend it on drinks or they just donate more in good mood.

However, good parties require a lot of efforts from multiple individuals. There is nothing worse than organizing a bad fundraising party. If you get a reputation of bad party maker, there is little chance that this fundraising way will be open to you for long.

That's why parties should be original and fun. Some of the groups due to political decisions are not selling alcohol or any other drugs at their soli-parties.

Infotours

Infotours are the more advanced version of a presentation event/party. An infotour is a set of events happening around different cities with the goal of informing people about the situation, but also raising funds for the cause.

Not only are they are good for raising funds, but also for establishing networks with other activists. Connections that you are building on the road are irreplaceable in your struggle. People that you might meet during an infotour might become comrades till the end of your life.

However, it is also a lot of work. In many cases infotours have an intensive schedule and we would suggest not to do it longer than a couple of weeks, otherwise your head might give up before your body

Tattoo Circus

Many ABC and other autonomous groups raise money for prisoners through organising Tattoo Circuses. These are events where tattoo artists give their time for free. People pay to get tattooed and all this money goes to prisoners or support campaigns. They can raise many thousands of euros over one weekend. Tattoo Circuses also have programs of workshops and presentations to raise awareness about different cases of repression and different struggles. Many groups also organise music, food and drinks to sell to fundraise over the weekend.

Benefit Gigs/Shows/Concerts

Fundraising gigs are a great way to raise money. However, if you are paying the bands or even just paying their petrol, sometimes it is hard to even 'break even'. Benefit gigs are often the best when bands give their time for free and so all the money can go to prisoners. They can be a good opportunity to do a stall and prisoner letter writing too.

Many groups find they make more money from music events that can have more people, such as a rave or a hip hop night compared to a punk show. However, some people organise whole festivals that raise a lot of money through punk/metal/crust music - see the Fest in Vienna for inspiration!

Sport and Sponsored Events

Some individuals and groups will raise money through sponsoring. They will ask friends to give them a donation if they do a 10k run for example. Some people even do this with shaving their head or other silly things! It takes a lot of energy and commitment but can be a nice way to fundraise.

New York ABC and supporting groups also organise a 'Running Down the Walls'. These sponsored runs raise much needed funds for their work. People can also walk/bike/roll the 5k routes.

Raffles

Raffles are simply where people buy a ticket and potentially win a prize. They can be a great addition at any event, such as a presentation or benefit gig. You can ask supporters to donate prizes and can get extra-nice things through five-finger discounts at your local stores!

Merchandise

Merchandise never goes out of fashion. People always seem happy to buy benefit t-shirts, patches and other items. They can be expensive to print and organise, however, costs can be reduced through doing the screen printing yourselves in your group (or finding volunteers to do it), as well as finding t-shirts in charity shops. Some groups will also appropriate blank t-shirts from corporate stores ready to be screen printed on!